

**Job Satisfaction of Family Services Workers and Clinicians in the Green
River Region: A Quantitative Study**

**Retention of Family Services Workers II and Clinicians
in the Green River Region: A Qualitative Study**

Martha Ryan

The research study gathered quantitative and qualitative data regarding job satisfaction and retention of Protection and Permanency (P and P) employees in the Cabinet for Families and Children. P and P is a division of Community Based Services which is department within the Cabinet for Families and Children. In an effort to better fulfill its mission to protect and promote Kentuckians by delivering quality human services P and P is currently undergoing accreditation through the Council of Accreditation. Among the many areas that the Council addresses is workforce retention. Maintaining a stable workforce is an important challenge for P and P. The purpose of the study was to gather information to increase employee retention and thus improve services to clients.

The quantitative study was a non-experimental design with purposive, criterion sampling. Data was gathered using a thirty-five-item survey. Twenty-six of the items were questions about job satisfaction in four areas: pay; task requirements; organizational policies and professional status. These items were a modified version of the Index of Work Satisfaction, and used a seven-point response scale, with one showing the highest level of satisfaction and seven showing the lowest. The remaining seven items gathered demographics for education, job position, area of work, yearly pay, age, number of years on the job and number of cases.

One hundred surveys were distributed. Fifty-seven were returned. Descriptive statistics showed that half of the respondents hold MSW or BSW degrees. The remaining half held bachelor's degrees in fields related to social work. The mean age of the respondents is 33. The mean number of years on the job is slightly more than three. Annual salaries ranged from twenty five to forty five thousand dollars per year with over half the respondents reporting an annual salary of less than thirty thousand. Respondents were most satisfied in the area of feeling that they had professional status, followed by satisfaction with pay. Respondents were less happy with task requirements. Respondents were least happy with organizational policies.

Pearson correlations were run to determine if there were relationships between total job satisfaction and area of work, or # of years worked, or # of cases or age. No significant relationship was found with the exception of age, which showed a positive correlation at the .05 level. One-way ANOVAs were performed to determine if education affected job satisfaction in any of the four areas of satisfaction and in total satisfaction. No significant results were found.

Study tends to point to a youthful population with a minimum number of years experience who show few differences as to job satisfaction in regard to their demographics in any of the four areas of satisfaction. P and P workers in the Green River Region are either "homogenous" or the questionnaire was not a particularly good one for this specific population.

The qualitative study was exploratory and mini-ethnographic using non-probabilistic sampling. The study gathered in-depth data on work experiences that influence employees remaining with P and P. Face to face interviews were conducted asking for responses to nine open ended questions. Respondent were ten workers who had been with P and P for five years or longer. Data was analyzed by the Tesch method of de-contextualizing and re-contextualizing. Several themes were found. Internal rewards such as helping others and making a difference in their lives had influenced the workers to continue in their P and P positions. The flexible nature of the job tended to be appealing to the respondents. Computers and computer work was a recurring theme associated with negativity. Other positive themes were supervision, relations with co-workers. Other negative themes were the level of paperwork and sense of powerlessness with the court system. A theme with a contradictory theme was pay.

Results of both studies will be used to inform the agency about factors that make for employee satisfaction and retention. Organizational policies, task requirements, and pay may be areas of satisfaction for further studies. A study to gather information about people who have left the agency might be beneficial. Workers leaving P and P need to be surveyed.

Changes to the study would include modification of the demographics section. Expansion and improvement of the literature review is needed.

The study will be shared with the Cabinet Institutional Review Board, and will be presented at the June 2002 Green River Region monthly supervisors' meeting.

JOB SATISFACTION AND RETENTION OF PROTECTION AND PERMANENCY WORKERS IN THE GREEN RIVER REGION

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BACKGROUND

- Protection and Permanency
- Community Based Services
- Cabinet for Families & Children
- Council of Accreditation (COA)
- Employee Retention as area of COA evaluation
- Observed high worker turnover rate over researcher's twenty year period of employment

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

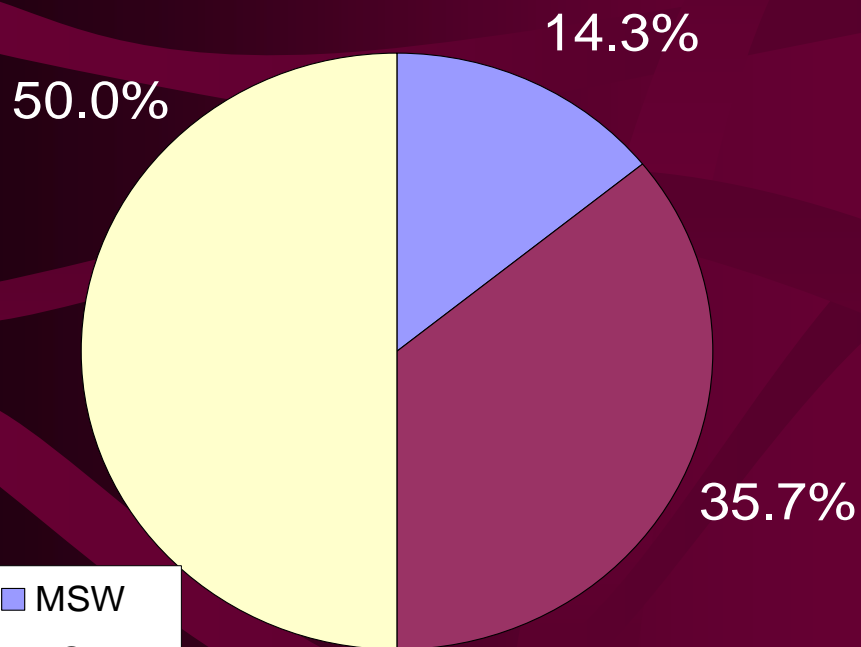
- What are the characteristics of P and P workers in the Green River Region
- In what area are P and P workers most satisfied? Least?
- Is there a relationship between job satisfaction and age, number of years at P and P and number of cases?
- Does education level of P and P workers affect job satisfaction?

DESIGN

- Non-experimental
- Purposive, criterion sampling
- Measurement tool, questionnaire based on the Index of Work Satisfaction
 - 26 item Likert scale
 - 4 areas of satisfaction: pay, task requirements, organizational policies, professional status
 - 7 response options with 1 showing the greatest level of satisfaction
 - 7 item demographics; education, job title, service area, pay category, age, # or yrs with P and P, # cases

What are the characteristics of P and P workers in the Green River Region?

Level of Education



■ MSW
■ BSW
■ Related

Means(sd)

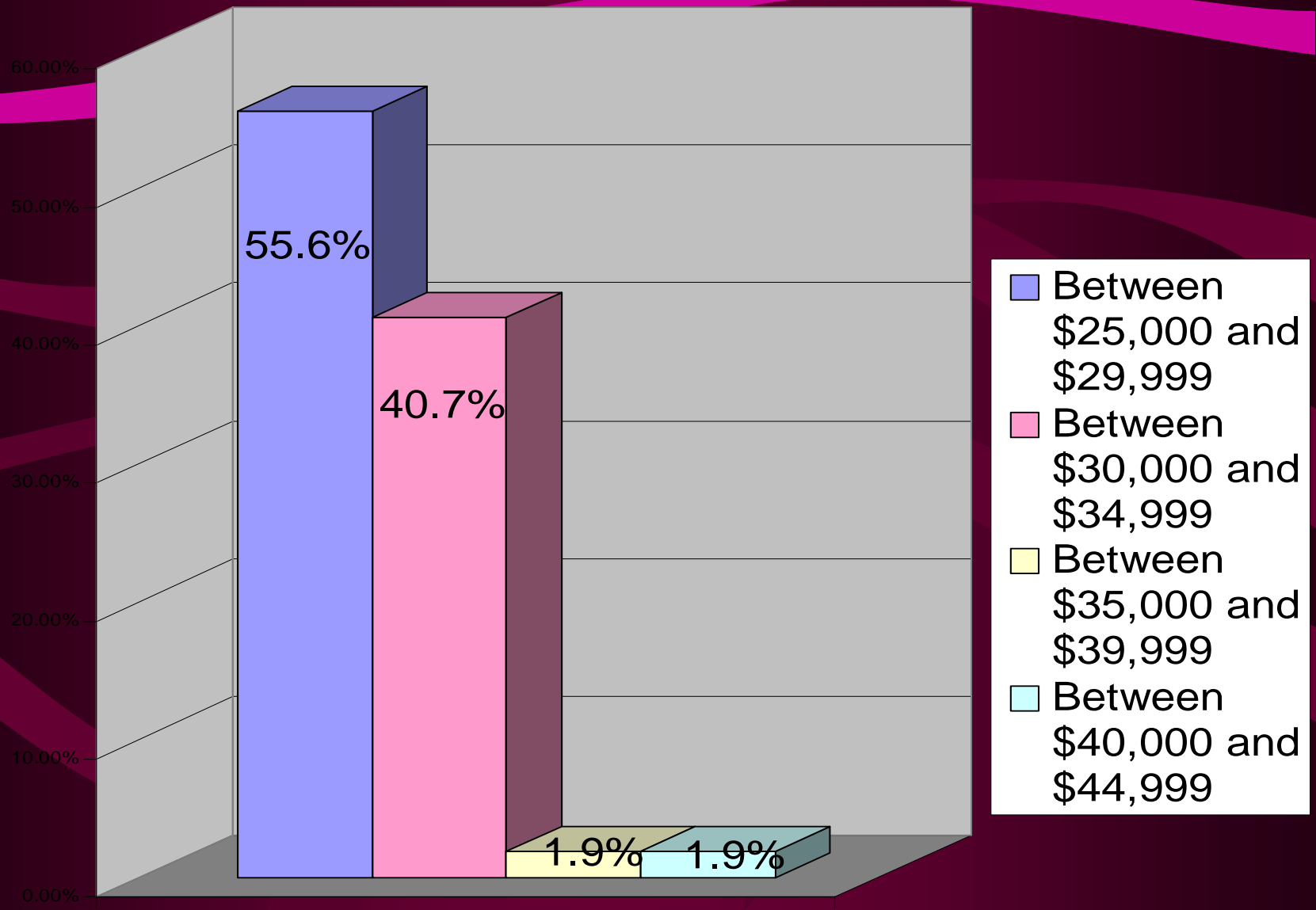
Age 32.92(9.67)

Yrs.
Worked 3.39(4.86)

Cases 18.61(8.14)

50%+ return (57/102)

Annual Salaries



In what areas are P and P workers most satisfied? Least?

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Professional Status	56	1.57	5.29	3.0230	.7144
Pay	57	2.17	6.00	4.3538	.8417
Task Requirements	56	2.17	6.67	4.6577	1.0192
Organizational Policies	56	1.86	6.86	4.7066	.9548

Is there a relationship between total job satisfaction and demographics?

Used independent t-test and Pearson correlations

Area of Work $t(33) = .80, ns$

of Years with P and P $r(44) = .02, ns$

of Cases Serviced $r(39) = .30, ns$

➤ No significant relationships for these demographics.

Age $r(49) = .28, p < .05$

➤ There was a positive relationship found between total job satisfaction and age.

Does education level affect job satisfaction of P and P workers?

- One way ANOVA was conducted on each of the areas of satisfaction.
- No significant findings resulted for any of the areas. Workers with MSWs, BSWs and related subject degrees have similar levels of job satisfaction in all areas

Total Satisfaction	$F(2, 52) = .182, ns$
Pay	$F(2, 55) = .198, ns$
Task Requirements	$F(2, 54) = .111, ns$
Organizational Policies	$F(2, 54) = .302, ns$
Professional Status	$F(2, 54) = .894, ns$

DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE STUDY

- Homogenous group as to job satisfaction
- Maybe this was not a good test for this population
- Workers satisfied with professional status
- Workers dissatisfied in pay, task requirements and organizational policies in that order

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS

- How have job experience, supervision, pay and education affected a worker's decision to remain in his/her position at P and P?
- What experiences have caused a worker to think about leaving his/her position?
- How would a worker encourage someone to accept a position with P and P?

DESIGN AND SAMPLE

- Exploratory
- Mini-ethnographic
- Non-probabilistic, purposive sampling
- Participants were ten workers with five years experience with P and P
- Data collection was through a nine question open-ended interview
- Interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed.
- Raffle of a \$25 gift certificate as an incentive.
- Tesch method of analysis

Theme 1: HELPING/ MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“...someone will come back and say... I couldn't have made it through that time in my life without your help.”

“I really love my people. I care about my people. I know that social workers can really help people and that's my main incentive.”

“...just seeing that you can make a difference in somebody's life...It's rewarding.”

“...internal reward you get with seeing a family...get their issues resolved, that's the reward that nothing else can give to you.”

Theme 2: FLEXIBILITY

“...the travel, the diversity of the job are what I like most of all, just not doing the same thing everyday.”

“...one day you’re dealing with a nursing home, and the next day you’re dealing with a hospital and the next day you’re dealing with a person alone in their own home. There’s always something different.”

“...and I like the idea you’re not set in one location or tied to a desk, you’re at your desk some, you’re out in the field some.”

Theme 3: COMPUTER

“..but I feel like again we’re acting like data entry operators, we spend so much time at the keyboard and not working with clients.”

“I hate them. Sometimes when I’m working on the one here and it messes up, I just get sick at my stomach. Nothing would make me happier than to take a chainsaw to it, but you know that’s state property and I can’t do that.”

“TWIST when I first started was horrendous. Now I’ve gotten a lot better and it makes a lot more sense and it’s a lot easier to use.”

DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE STUDY

- Impressed by both the sincerity and the courage of those who agreed to be interviewed
- Overwhelming theme was internal reward of being of positive influence in a people's lives
- Other themes with positive tones were
 - supervision
 - relations with coworkers
- Other negative themes were
 - paperwork
 - sense of powerless with court system
- Contradictory theme was pay

IMPLICATIONS

- Organizational policies, task requirements and pay may be areas that merit further looking into
- A study to gather information from people who have left the Cabinet could be beneficial
- Workers leaving P and P need to be surveyed
- Will be presenting study at the June 2002 regional supervisors' meeting
- Would change my demographic section of my questionnaire
- Would improve and expand my literature review